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Note verbale dated 2 July 2013 from the Permanent Mission of Bahrain to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit herewith the following documents:

(i) Statement of the Co-Chairs of the twenty-third Gulf Cooperation Council-European Union Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, 30 June 2013 (see annex);

(ii) Final communiqué of the thirty-third session of the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council Al Sakhir, Kingdom of Bahrain, 25 December 2012 (see annex).

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the United Nations requests that the present note verbale and its annex be circulated as a document of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

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[Original: Arabic]

23rd Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf-European Union Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting

Co-Chairs' Statement

23rd Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf-European Union Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting

Manama, 30 June 2013

1. The 23rd session of the Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) and the European Union was held in Manama, capital of the Kingdom of Bahrain, on 30 June 2013. The GCC delegation was led by Shaikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al-Khalifa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain, and the European Union delegation was led by Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission. Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani, GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting.

2. The Ministers stated that the continued strengthening of relations between the GCC and the European Union was an essential and effective foundation for achieving regional security and stability. They also welcomed the progress achieved in the political dialogue and approved the minutes of the last meeting of the Joint Cooperation Committee, held in Brussels on 24 April 2013. They expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the Joint Cooperation Programme (2010-2013).

3. The two sides reviewed the steps and measures which the European Union had taken to support economic development in the Eurozone, to overcome the effects of the global financial crisis, and to support and encourage the protection of joint investments, in order to strengthen economic cooperation relations between the two sides.

4. The Ministers congratulated Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani on his accession to the throne in the State of Qatar, wished him every success in achieving further progress and prosperity for the State of Qatar, and expressed appreciation to his father the Amir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani for the achievements and progress during his reign.

5. The Ministers welcomed the ongoing cooperation between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Iraq, and also expressed the importance of maintaining the security, stability and territorial integrity of Iraq.

6. The two sides urged the Islamic Republic of Iran to play a constructive role in the region, based on respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs.

7. The Ministers expressed their concern at the complete lack of progress in resolving the dispute between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the three islands of Abu Musa, Lesser Tunb and Greater Tunb, and confirmed their support for the settlement of this dispute in accordance with

international law, either through direct negotiations or by referring the matter to the International Court of Justice.

8. The Ministers emphasized their support for the ongoing diplomatic efforts of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, and especially the efforts of the E3+3 Group aimed at achieving a diplomatic solution to the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme, and called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to comply with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) concerning the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy.

9. In the light of the increasing concern as regards the implementation of safety norms and standards of its nuclear facilities, especially the Bushehr reactor and its potential impact on the region, the Ministers called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to comply with international safety norms and standards.

10. The Ministers underlined the importance of reaching international consensus to achieve a comprehensive political solution to bring an end to the Syrian crisis, to stop the bloodshed afflicting the Syrian people, achieve their legitimate aspirations, safeguard Syria's security and unity, and avoid serious implications for the whole region. The Ministers emphasized the pressing need to achieve an urgent political settlement to the Syrian crisis and called on all parties to make a positive and effective contribution to achieving this objective. In this context, the Ministers pledged to make all possible efforts in helping to create appropriate conditions for holding a successful peace conference on Syria. The Ministers condemned the participation of the Hizbullah militia and other foreign forces in military operations in Syria. They also further expressed concern regarding the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people inside Syria and in the region as a whole, and urged the international community to make further commitments to provide assistance, to allow for free access for humanitarian aid, and to supply aid and protection inside Syria and for Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries.

11. The Ministers reaffirmed the position of both sides that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East region was fundamental to international peace and security, in accordance with United Nations resolutions and the Arab peace initiative, leading to the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State on the land occupied since 1967. The Ministers also welcomed the current efforts of the Secretary of State of the United States of America, John Kerry, to give fresh momentum to the Middle East peace process.

The Ministers affirmed their position regarding non-recognition of any changes to the pre-1967 borders, other than those agreed by both parties, including the city of Jerusalem. They stressed their common position that Israeli settlements in any place in the occupied Palestinian territories were illegal under international law and constituted an obstacle to peace. In this regard, they requested Israel to put an immediate stop to all settlement activities in East Jerusalem and in the rest of the West Bank, including natural growth, and to dismantle all existing settlements. The Ministers also agreed on the need to continue to provide political and financial support for Palestinian State-building efforts.

12. The Ministers expressed their full support for the Gulf initiative on Yemen and comprehensive Yemeni national dialogue, as well as their support for President

Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi in leading Yemen through this critical phase in order to achieve the aspirations of the Yemeni people and in countering radical elements.

13. The Ministers reiterated their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and emphasized the importance of international counter-terrorism cooperation.

14. The Ministers expressed their gratitude to the King, Government and people of the Kingdom of Bahrain for their warm welcome and hospitality, and agreed to hold the 24th meeting of the Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting in the European Union in 2014.

[Original: Arabic]

Final communiqué adopted by the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its thirty-third session

Sakhir, Kingdom of Bahrain, Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 Safar A.H. 1434 (24 and 25 December A.D. 2012)

At the invitation of King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa of Bahrain, the Supreme Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its thirty-third session in Sakhir, Bahrain, on Monday 11 and Tuesday 12 Safar A.H. 1434 (24 and 25 December A.D. 2012). The meeting was chaired by King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa and attended by:

Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashed Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai;

Prince Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia;

Fahd bin Mahmoud Al-Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers of the Sultanate of Oman;

Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Crown Prince of the State of Qatar; and

Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait.

Mr. Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, also participated in the meeting.

The Supreme Council congratulated King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa (may God preserve and protect him) on assuming the chairmanship of its thirty-third session. It expressed its appreciation for his opening statement and his endeavours to enhance cooperation in all areas between GCC States.

The Supreme Council expressed its deep appreciation for the considerable and genuine efforts and achievements of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia (may God protect him), and his sound Government during his chairmanship of the thirty-second session of the Supreme Council.

The Council thanked God Almighty for the success of the operation that he had recently undergone, and prayed God to grant him lasting good health and happiness so that he could continue to serve the Kingdom and people of Saudi Arabia and support the Council's endeavours.

The Council expressed its appreciation for his statement, in which he had emphasized his commitment to the continued progress of member States and to the Gulf Cooperation Council's transition from cooperation to a strong and coherent union in accordance with aspirations of GCC citizens.

The Council welcomed the opening in Vienna of the Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue. The Centre would build on the King's work on Arab, Islamic and international issues by promoting dialogue and combating extremism.

The Council commended the judicious address delivered by the Amir of the State of Kuwait. It also commended the agreement of Kuwait, in response to the proposal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to convene the first international donors' conference, which would be held in Kuwait on 30 January 2013 with the participation of the United Nations with a view to assisting and providing humanitarian relief to the Syrian people. The Council wished the Conference every success.

The Council commended the visit of the Amir of Qatar to the Gaza Strip in October 2012. It praised his efforts to break the siege on the Strip, provide humanitarian relief and launch a number of economic and development projects. The Council hoped that the visit would mark the start of new endeavours to unify the Palestinian people and ensure that their legitimate objectives were achieved.

In view of the desire of the leaders of the GCC States to enhance their joint cooperation and establish full GCC citizenship, the Council reviewed the follow-up reports and recommendations submitted by the Ministerial Council. In the light of the rapid changes and developments taking place in the region and throughout the world, it reviewed political issues at the regional and international levels, and took the following key decisions:

I. Joint action

The Council expressed its appreciation for the steps taken to implement its decisions on joint action in the areas stipulated in article 3 of the Economic Agreement. It stressed the need to strengthen a spirit of Gulf citizenship among GCC citizens.

With a view to enhancing economic integration among member States and implementing its decisions in that regard, the Council discussed the economic situation in GCC States. The Council welcomed those States' significant economic growth and the comprehensive development that had taken place in various sectors.

The Council directed the committees to rapidly implement the provisions of the Economic Agreement on harmonizing fiscal and monetary policy, infrastructure integration and productive capacity-building in order to provide employment opportunities for citizens. The Council tasked the Financial and Economic Committee with proposing practical programmes with set time frames to promote economic integration among GCC States for those purposes.

With a view to promoting the welfare of young people in GCC States, harnessing their potential, developing their talents and meeting their aspirations, the Council commissioned a comprehensive study of various programmes related to youth activities and family and childhood issues in GCC States. It decided to convene a comprehensive seminar on the topic.

The Council reviewed the joint action process by considering the relevant reports and recommendations of the Ministerial Council, ministerial committees and the secretariat. It took note of the follow-up reports and adopted all of the regulations pertaining to the various areas of joint action.

The Council endorsed the decisions taken by the Joint Defence Council. It welcomed the creation of a unified military command to coordinate, oversee and

direct regular and supplementary ground, naval and air forces and the decision to allow armed forces personnel on official missions or training courses in GCC member States, in addition to their families, to receive treatment in military hospitals in those States.

The Council approved the amended GCC Security Agreement, which had been signed by the Ministers of Interior at their 31st meeting on 13 November 2012. It underscored the importance of enhancing cooperation, particularly in connection with sharing information among member States' security agencies.

The Council underscored that its member States categorically rejected all forms and manifestations of terrorism and extremism, irrespective of their sources, motives or justifications.

It condemned the recent heinous terrorist bombings in the city of Manama, Bahrain, in which a number of innocent people had lost their lives. It commended the constructive and comprehensive response of the Government of Bahrain and expressed its full solidarity with Bahrain in its efforts to safeguard its national unity, security and stability.

The Council welcomed the opening of the International Centre of Excellence for Curbing Violent Extremism (Hidayah) in Abu Dhabi, where experts from all countries would pool their specialized knowledge and experience with a view to combating violent extremism in all its forms and manifestations.

The Council expressed its appreciation for the efforts of the Advisory Board and endorsed the Board's views on enhancing a sense of citizenship, the strategy on youth and the strategy to promote private and public sector employment in GCC States. The Council endorsed the submission of those views to the relevant ministerial committees, which would formulate implementing mechanisms.

The Council decided that the Advisory Board should take the following actions at its sixteenth session:

1. Consider the establishment of a food and drug regulatory authority for GCC States.

2. Consider the establishment of a joint GCC dedicated centre for public and preventative health.

3. Examine, evaluate and enhance the GCC States' media strategy.

4. Consider mechanisms to combat corruption, and examine obstacles to development in GCC States and their relation to value systems.

5. Evaluate and seek ways to improve child education programmes.

With a view to furthering the shared interests of the Gulf Cooperation Council and its partners, the Council called for the implementation of the outcomes of the joint ministerial-level meetings that had been held with States and economic groups.

II. Political matters

The Iranian occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates

The Council reiterated its firm rejection of the continuing occupation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of the islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, which belong to the United Arab Emirates. In that regard, the Council emphasized the following points:

- It expressed support for the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and over their territorial waters, airspace, continental shelf and exclusive economic zone, which formed an inseparable part of the United Arab Emirates;
- It expressed its regret that contacts with the Islamic Republic of Iran had not produced any positive results towards resolving the issue and hence promoting the security and stability of the region;
- It affirmed that any actions or practices undertaken by Iran on the three islands would be deemed null and void and would not affect the islands' legal or historic status, which confirmed the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over its three islands;
- It affirmed that all peaceful means conducive to restoring the rights of the United Arab Emirates in respect of its three islands would be considered.

It appealed to the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond to the efforts of the United Arab Emirates to resolve the issue through direct negotiations or by recourse to the International Court of Justice.

Relations with Iran

The Council rejected and denounced the ongoing Iranian interference in the internal affairs of GCC States and called upon Iran immediately and completely to desist from such actions and from all policies and measures that exacerbated tensions and threatened regional security and stability.

The Council emphasized that Iran must fully uphold the principles of good neighbourliness, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of other States, the settlement of disputes through peaceful means and the rejection of the threat or use of force.

The Iranian nuclear programme

The Council reviewed the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme, which threatened the security and stability not only of the region, but of the world. It urged Iran to cooperate fully with the IAEA. It reaffirmed its position that Iran should commit to establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, in the Middle East region, including the Arabian Gulf region. At the same time, the Council commended international efforts peacefully to resolve the issue of the Iranian nuclear programme.

The Council affirmed the right of States, including Iran, to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It emphasized, however, that States using nuclear power were

responsible for the safety of each nuclear facility, must safeguard the environment of the wider geographical region and must fully comply with safety, security and non-proliferation standards. In view of the fact that Iran had started operating the Bushehr reactor, GCC States urged Iran to maintain full transparency in that regard, immediately accede to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and enforce the highest safety standards in its facilities.

Syria

The Council reviewed developments in Syria. Noting the deteriorating situation in the country and the great suffering of the Syrian people, it expressed its grave concern and sadness at the ongoing bloodshed and loss of innocent lives and destruction of cities and infrastructure. A political transition process was therefore urgently needed. The Council urged the international community to take urgent and genuine steps to stop the massacres, which violated all revealed religions, international law and humanitarian values.

The Council affirmed the importance of supporting the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces which had been established in Doha in November 2012 under the auspices of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, and the League of Arab States. The Coalition was the legitimate representative of the Syrian people. The Council trusted that that step would promote a unified international approach to the Syrian issue, end the bloodshed, and facilitate the establishment of a modern, secure State for all Syrians, without exception or discrimination, under the rule of law.

The Council urged States and international organizations to provide all forms of emergency humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people in order to alleviate their plight. It underlined its support for the mission of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, which should be underpinned by consensus within the Security Council, particularly its permanent members, in accordance with Security Council's powers and responsibilities with regard to the maintenance of international security and stability.

The situation in the Palestinian territories and developments in the Arab-Israeli conflict

The Supreme Council reviewed the latest developments in the Palestinian issue and emphasized that the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace depended on Israel's complete withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967, namely Palestine, the occupied Syrian Golan and the land that it continued to occupy in the south of Lebanon, and on the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. Those were the same principles embodied in the Arab Peace Initiative and the authoritative international resolutions.

The Council congratulated the Palestinian people and its leaders on Palestine's attainment of non-member observer State status in the United Nations. It expressed the hope that that achievement would mark a significant step towards the establishment of a Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Council once more called for Palestinian factions to unite, end their divisions, set aside their differences and put interests of the Palestinian people first.

It condemned the settlement policies adopted by Israel in order to alter the geographic and demographic nature of the Palestinian territories. Those policies constituted an ethical and humanitarian crime and a serious violation of international law and had no legal effect in favour of Israel.

The Supreme Council welcomed the ceasefire agreement in Gaza that had been brokered by the Arab Republic of Egypt. It affirmed the importance of ongoing efforts to strengthen that agreement and avoid any recurrence of hostile actions by Israel. The Council held Israel legally responsible for that aggression and called upon the international community to ensure the provision and delivery of urgent humanitarian assistance to the Gaza Strip.

In that connection, the Council commended the efforts by GCC member States to provide humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people, especially in the Gaza Strip, and the humanitarian assistance provided by the Bahrain Royal Charter Organization, under the guidance of Sheikh Nasr bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Chair of the Board of Trustees, with a view to alleviating the suffering of the Palestinians living under siege in Gaza.

Yemen

King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa briefed the leaders of member States on the contents of the letter that he had received from Abdrabuh Mansour Hadi Mansour, President of the Republic of Yemen, regarding progress towards implementing the GCC Initiative and the steps taken to enhance security and security in Yemen. The Yemeni President thanked the leaders for their solidarity with the Yemeni people during the political crisis and their efforts to avert the spectre of civil war.

The Council commended the progress made in the first phase of the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism as a result of the efforts of the Yemeni President and the Government of National Unity, in addition to the support of the Yemeni people political stakeholders. The Council affirmed its support for all actions to realize the hopes and aspirations of the Yemeni people. It trusted that all stakeholders would work together and comply with measures agreed upon by all parties. The Council welcomed the recent decree issued by the Yemeni President concerning the restructuring of the armed forces in accordance with the GCC Initiative and Implementation Mechanism, which was a key step in bolstering security and stability in Yemen.

The Council looks forward to the successful implementation of the second phase of the GCC Initiative, namely the convening of the Conference for National Dialogue with the participation of all segments and stakeholders in Yemeni society, which will agree on steps to promote the country's best interests and safeguard its unity, security and stability.

Iraq

The Council reaffirmed its previous resolutions and its firm position in favour of the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq and non-interference in its internal affairs. The Council appealed to other countries to adopt that approach and called upon the Government of Iraq to adopt confidence-building measures with neighbouring States on the basis of good neighbourliness and non-interference. The Council affirmed that all stakeholders in Iraq should work

towards comprehensive and lasting political reconciliation in order to meet the aspirations of the Iraqi people, realize security and stability and safeguard the country's Arab and Islamic identity.

The Council reaffirmed that Iraq must implement all relevant Security Council resolutions. For instance, it must resolve the issue of Iraq-Kuwait boundary marker maintenance in accordance with Security Council resolution 833 (1993) by promptly removing all Iraqi encroachments impeding the maintenance of the boundary markers between the two countries. Iraq must also resolve the issue of compensation for Iraqi farmers in accordance with Security Council resolution 899 (1994), ascertain the fate of Kuwaiti and other prisoners and missing persons who remained unaccounted for, and return the property and national archives of Kuwait. The Council urged the United Nations and other relevant bodies to continue their valuable efforts to ensure compliance with those obligations.

Myanmar

The Council condemned the oppression, brutal massacres, ethnic cleansing and human rights violations perpetrated in order to forcibly displace Muslim Rohingya citizens of Myanmar. The Council expressed solidarity with those people in their plight and stated that it would provide aid and assistance. It empowered the Ministerial Council to hold consultations with States in that region to find a solution to this crisis.

The Council called upon the international community and, in particular, the United Nations Security Council and civil society, regional and international organizations to shoulder their responsibilities in that regard, find a solution to that problem as a matter of urgency and provide emergency humanitarian assistance.

Lastly, the Council expressed its great appreciation to King Hamad bin Issa Al Khalifa of Bahrain, Chairman of the current session of the Supreme Council (may God preserve and protect him), to his judicious Government and to the people of Bahrain for the warm and generous hospitality extended to the leaders and delegations of the GCC States.

The leaders of the member States of the Gulf Cooperation Council welcomed the generous offer extended by Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait (may God preserve and protect him), to host the thirty-fourth session of the Supreme Council in the State of Kuwait in 2013.

Sakhir
12 Safar A.H. 1434
(25 December A.D. 2012)